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To: 'microsoft.atr(a)usdoj.gov'
Date: 1/23/02 11:47am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Hello,

I would like to express my displeasure with the Microsoft antitrust settlement proposal. I feel that the single biggest issues affecting competition are the facts that 1) Microsoft has an effective monopoly of the "office productivity suite" class of applications, and 2) they make it very difficult for other vendors to interoperate with their product (Microsoft Office). Potential new vendors must support the Office document formats because they are the de facto standard, but they are undocumented, and thus it is almost impossible for any potential new vendors to support them well. As a result, the consumer has no choice but to buy Office, and because it only runs on Windows, he has no choice in operating systems either.

I feel that any effective settlement must include the following conditions:

- 1) Microsoft must release full documentation for the existing Office file formats;
- 2) Microsoft must be prohibited from introducing changes to these formats without releasing full documentation of the changes;
- 3) Microsoft must be release said documentation in advance of their actual support for the changes, to prevent other vendors from having to play catch-up.
- 4) Microsoft must participate in the development of new, open document formats, preferably based on XML and governed by an independent standards body.

The effect of these conditions would be to allow other vendors to develop a product competitive to Microsoft Office for the first time in years. This in turn would open the door to competition in many other areas.

Mike Simpson

Typed with the Dvorak keyboard layout: <http://www.mwbrooks.com/dvorak/>